



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

JAN 13 1998

OFFICE OF
SOLID WASTE AND EMERGENCY
RESPONSE

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: National Remedy Review Board Recommendations on the Lenz Oil Superfund Site

FROM: Bruce K. Means, Chair
National Remedy Review Board

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. Means".

TO: William E. Muno, Director
Superfund Division
EPA Region 5

Purpose

The National Remedy Review Board (NRRB) has completed its review of the proposed remedial action for the Lenz Oil Site in Lemont, Illinois. This memorandum documents the NRRB's advisory recommendations.

Context for NRRB Review

As you recall, the Administrator announced the NRRB as one of the October 1995 Superfund Administrative Reforms to help control remedy costs and promote consistent and cost-effective decisions. The NRRB furthers these goals by providing a cross-regional, management-level, "real time" review of high cost (and thus potentially controversial) proposed response actions. The Board will review all proposed cleanup actions where: (1) the estimated cost of the preferred alternative exceeds \$30 million, or (2) the preferred alternative costs more than \$10 million and is 50% more expensive than the least-costly, protective, ARAR-compliant alternative.

The NRRB review evaluates the proposed actions for consistency with the National Contingency Plan and relevant Superfund policy and guidance. It focuses on the nature and complexity of the site; health and environmental risks; the range of alternatives that address site risks; the quality and reasonableness of the cost estimates for alternatives; Regional, State/tribal, and other stakeholder opinions on the proposed actions (to the extent they are known at the time of review); and any other relevant factors.

-- Pre-decisional; Not for distribution --

Generally, the NRRB makes “advisory recommendations” to the appropriate Regional decision maker before the Region issues the proposed plan. The Region will then include these recommendation sin the Administrative Record for the site. While the Region is expected to give the Board’s recommendations substantial weight, other important factors, such as subsequent public comment or technical analyses of remedial options, may influence the final Regional decision. It is important to remember that the NRRB does not change the Agency’s current delegations or alter in any way the public’s role in site decisions.

NRRB Advisory Recommendations

The NRRB reviewed the informational package for the site and discussed related issues with EPA’s Bill Bolen and Mary Tierney, and Larry Eastep of the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency on December 2-3, 1997. Based on this review and discussion, the NRRB supports the Region’s preference for alternative 9(a), which includes alternative 10 as a contingency. The Board offers the following comments.

- The Region should state in its decision document the criteria it will use to determine whether to invoke the contingent remedy (alternative 10).
- The Region’s preferred alternative relies substantially on excavation and treatment that may trigger costly RCRA Subtitle C and/or State waste disposal requirements. The Board strongly supports the evaluation during remedial design of the capability of vacuum enhanced recovery (or other equivalent technologies) for managing adequately the light non-aqueous phase liquid (LNAPL). These technologies may have the potential to achieve cleanup objectives while avoiding the disposal and management costs associated with the proposed excavation and treatment alternative.
- The information presented to the Board did not sufficiently define the physical properties (i.e. thickness of the LNAPL and smear layers) governing the interaction between the LNAPL layer/smear layer and the dissolved phase in groundwater. In order to better evaluate during the remedial design the relative performance of the competing alternatives, the Region should refine its characterization of such physical properties.
- The Board questions whether Alternative 2 (which is the least expensive alternative that complies with applicable or relevant and appropriate requirements (ARARs)), can be completed in ten years. For this reason, the Board encourages the Region to consider the effects that a longer remediation time frame would have on the Alternative 2 cost estimate.
- The Region should consider quick response actions to protect the nearby underground pipeline from migrating LNAPL. Doing so should prevent the pipeline from becoming a preferential pathway for LNAPL migration to surface water and reduce cleanup complexity should the LNAPL move into the pipeline corridor.

The NRRB appreciates the Region’s efforts to work closely with the State and community to identify the current proposed remedy. The Board members also express their appreciation to the Region and the State of Illinois for their participation in the review process. We encourage

-- Pre-decisional; Not for distribution --

Region 5 management and staff to work with their Regional NRRB representative and the Region 5/7 Accelerated Response Center at Headquarters to, discuss any appropriate follow-up actions.

Please do not hesitate to give me a call if you have any questions at 703-603-8815.

cc: S. Luftig
T. Fields
B. Breen
J. Woolford
C. Hooks
E. Cotsworth
OERR Center Directors

-- Pre-decisional; Not for distribution --